

# All the Chief's Dragons

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Summary: A dragon rider crashes on Berk, foreshadowing the troubles ahead as Berk's allies are about to learn of their friends' change of heart, and a new enemy is rising from the south...

## 1. Prologue

**\*\*Prologue\*\***

There was a rider in the night. A dragon rider. They were flying low above the ocean, forced down by the storm above. The dragon was moving her wings with slow, deliberate moves to compensate for the quickly shifting air currents.

"I only wish there was a bloody gap in these clouds," the rider exclaimed, trying to sneak a peak upwards without loosing an eye to the stinging rain. "We could get above this mess then."

The dragon grunted in agreement. Her wings were itching from the constant beating of the rain. Already having forgone two meals due to lack of islands to land on, she was quite hungry, too. Thunder crackled up in the clouds. She let out a howl as an answer then looked back at her rider with blame in her eyes.

"No, I didn't misread the map. I told you we will fly all day. There is not a single rock above water in the area we passed over. We're late because of the storm, that's all. And no, there was no sign of this bastardly weather when we took off. You know that."

The dragon sighed in surrender. She tried to keep her mind off the rain. Her rider was doing a routine mid-flight check on the straps of the saddle, but the familiar movements of the leather weren't good enough a distraction.

She was twisting her neck to get the soreness out of the muscles, when she noticed lights, low and to their right. Watchfires.

"Ah, that's Berk," the rider said, after the dragon let out an

excited bark, nodding towards the lights. "Oh, it's on the map, alright," she added, when her mount made an inquiring sound. "They are not particularly welcoming people. Especially not to you. Vikings. Tangled with some local nest a few centuries ago, and they seem to be unable to work it out since. It wouldn't be pretty for us to land there. Dragon paranoia, you know?"

The dragon considered that for a while. They cannot be all over the placeâ€¦ She made a slight wailing sound and jabbed her head to the right.

"Well, I guess we could go around and hide on the far side in the forrest then leave when the storm has passedâ€¦" She eyed the watchfires for second then twisted her left leg inwards to signal the direction change. Her dragon happily obeyed.

They didn't go straight for the fires but kept them slightly on their right. She didn't have a detailed map of the island, but the rider expected the village to be located beyond the line of lights and intended to avoid the Viking sentries by circling the settlement from the left.

She led her dragon to barely a wingspan high above the water, hoping to hide from the lookouts. They made their way to the island with doubled effort. The dragon let out a warning growl.

"Rock wall ahead, aye," she acknowledged and signaled the dragon to pull up. They began to ascend rapidly.

Only when they went over the edge of the cliff did they notice their mistake. The village was not at sea level but on the rock they just climbed. It was nearly invisible as all the lights had been put out either by the rain or their owners, so that the wind couldn't start a fire by knocking them over.

The rider cried out in surprise and twisted her legs to order a full turn and nose dive back towards the sea. That was the moment the lightning struck.

It didn't hit them directly, but they were both facing it, getting temporarily blinded. Being in mid-turn, the dragon lost her sense of direction, and her rider had no way of correcting it, not seeing at the moment. So the flying reptile took the dive â€” into the middle of the village.

Her vision cleared enough so that she realized what had happened, but all she could do was choosing a square, rather than a house to land upon. Braking the best she could, they crashed in front of what appeared to be the village forge.

The dragon took no injuries other than a few scratches from sliding some distance on the rough stone, but the rider was catapulted from the saddle by the impact force and flew straight into the wall of the forge.

It took a few moments for the dragon to clear her head, and when she looked around, she saw a smallish boy in a blacksmith's get-up kneeling beside her rider. She let out a shriek and launched forward but was stopped by the boy turning to her and raising his empty hands. He had no fear in his eyes.

"I'm not gonna harm either of you, but your rider is seriously hurt. She needs help," he said and gestured towards the rider. The dragon walked around him then froze from the sight before her.

The girl was mostly covered by her long riding coat, but her left leg and arm was visibly broken and she was unconscious. Probably not a bad thing, considering the pain from those wounds. Unlessâ€¦

She put her head real close to her riders and waited, heart thumping. Then she heard her inhale. She was alive. The relief was undescrivable. She turned to inspect the boy again, when people started appearing around them.

"Hiccup! What the hell was that noise?" a huge man asked, pushing people out of his way to the forge. He was holding a large round shield, but other than that, he didn't seem to be armed.

"Dad! Get the healers! A dragon rider was forced down by the storm. She is badly injured," the blacksmith boy answered. He was trying to pull a stretcher out from under a pile of parts and metal pieces.

"You heard him!" the man shouted to the crowd, and someone started for the upper village. He himself stepped to his son and yanked the carrying device free with a single hand. "Hiccup, what happened?"

"I don't know, I heard them crash, andâ€¦" he pointed at the dragon crouching in a protective stance next to its rider. His father set the stretcher down and observed the situation.

Stoick scratched his head in confusion. It definately was a Night Fury. No mistaking that body shape. Except it was white. And had devilish red eyes. And was visibly frightened. Then he looked at the girl's face and immediately saw the trouble to come.

He muttered one word as he was shoved aside by the arriving healers:

"Scalesmen."

## 2. Shadows of Tomorrow

**\*\*Shadows of Tomorrow\*\***

The storm had left quite a mess behind. Its destructiveness rivaled that of a dragon raid, but instead of being burnt to the ground, houses had been ravaged by wind. People were working all around the village, fixing roofs, rebuilding walls, and looking for missing items lost during the blizzard.

The dragons were helping out, too. Some of them were clearing away the larger pieces of debree, while the little Terrors were scouring through the pile of litter, making sure nothing of worth is thrown out. A group of women were drying freshly washed clothes by a flaming Nightmare, while a Nadder just landed with a net full of sheep. The winds had been so strong, they had simply picked up livestock, only to leave it stuck on the top of the pinetrees covering the island.

Stoick the Vast was walking through the village, checking on the repairs. He wasn't really paying attention, though. He knew his people would do a good job, and he had bigger things on his mind. Every few minutes, he looked up to his house, considering the significance of the girl lying unconscious inside.

In the lower village, a group of teenagers were talking about the exact same topic.

"So, what about this new chick who fell out of the sky?" Snotlout asked. He leaned against a house that was barely able to support its own weight. After a few loud creeks, Snotlout made a face and gave up being in a cool posture. "I mean, my dad told me to 'shut my hole', when I asked him about it, which is the sign of him shitting pants. That can't be good."

"Yeah, my dad has his 'expecting trouble' face up, too," Hiccup added. He was trying to fix the lifting mechanism under one of the huge night torches. The Vikings found out the hard way that converting all the torches to feeding bowls was a bad idea, when one night pirates tried to raid the village. "He did say something about 'Scalesmen, bad omen', though."

"Come on!" Fishlegs grunted under the weight of the torch he and the twins were holding for Hiccup. "That's a myth!"

"What?" He finally managed to get the counterweight unstuck.

"I read this tale about people who live with dragonsâ€"

"You mean like us." He started cleaning the cogwheels, only to find himself face-to-face with a sleepy Terrible Terror.

"No, no, no! We convinced our dragons to be nice. These people are said to have become as vicious as dragons!"

"But dragons are not vicious by nature!" The Terror bared its teeth at Hiccup.

"I know, I know! But this is an old Viking story. It must be full of inaccuracies."

"Where did you even read this? I've read every book in the village, and I never heard about this!" He tried to shoo the Terror, which had clearly messed up the torch by building its nest around the wheels.

"It's some kind of old family chronicle. I found it in the attic. Documents our history up to the founding of this village."

"And after that?" Tuffnut put in. "They forgot how to write?"

"Or maybe they were busy staying alive, genius?" his sister retorted. Their starting argument was cut short by Astrid, who was kneeling beside Hiccup, handing him the tools he needed.

"So Stoick and Spitelout think she is a Scalesmanâ€| Scaleswoman," she said and reached in to get the stubborn Terror.

"Well, it's easy to tell," Fishlegs answered with an all-knowing expression. "According to the story, all Scalesmen have reptile eyes tatooed on their eyelids."

"That checks out," Tuffnut said. "She has them eyes on eyes."

"Oh, right, I totally forgot you have the girliest job in the village, Healer's Apprentice," Snotlout grinned. "Please, indulge us with the details!"

"Your face, my fist. You have been warned," Tuffnut shot back without much enthusiasm. After Hiccup ceased to be the village idiot, Snotlout started taking cheap shots at everyone, but soon they all got used to it.

"Come on, 'Lout!" Hiccup said. "There is nothing wrong with being a male healer."

"I knew you would understand," Tuffnut put an arm around Hiccup's shoulders, visibly touched. Fishlegs and Ruffnut groaned as Tuffnut let go of the torch.

"Sureâ€¦ you're welcome. Why did your mom put you in Healer Training, anyhow?" He grabbed the torch-dwelling Terror and tossed it to Astrid.

"Well, do you remember that case with that one sheep?"

"Yeahâ€¦"

"I don't," Fishlegs said. "I passed out at the very beginning."

"Well, it was pretty gruesome," Astrid conceded. She was stroking the Terror's spine, so that it didn't try biting Hiccup.

"If it was gruesome by your standards, I'm glad I don't remember."

"Yeah, we get it," Ruffnut snapped. "The point is, Mother was so furious, that instead of beating us to death, like any proper Viking mother would have, she decided to humiliate us."

"So that's why you were on the carcass squad." Fishlegs mused as his chivalrous effort to hold the torch for Ruffnut started to fail.

"Exactly. Somehow, cleaning up dead dragons was never as cool as killing them. Tuff, grab the damned torch!" she yelled at her brother.

"You know, your lives' stories are fascinating," Snotlout said in a smug tone, as he joined the others holding the torch, "but we were talking about our parents being freaked out by a girl our ageâ€¦"

"She ain't gonna hurt anybody," Tuffnut replied. "She's unconscious, has a broken left arm, a broken left leg and three broken ribs on her left side. That's the side she hit the wall with. Damn lucky her head is intact."

"When do you think she'll wake up?" Fishlegs asked.

"Dunno. I hope soon. Feeding unconscious people isn't much fun." And he shot a side glance at Hiccup.

"Hey, it wasn't my idea to be out cold for a week," Hiccup said, and he sent up the torch. Those previously holding the contraption fell to the ground, panting. "But she really must be harmless in that state."

"I don't get it then. Why?"

"What are ye all doin' here, doin' nothin'?" Stoick's towering figure blocked out the sun. "Go, make yourselves useful! Son, I need to talk to you."

"Oh, dear!" The others dispersed muttering less than nice things under their breath. Hiccup fell in line behind the chief, marching towards the docks. He looked back and his eyes met Astrid's. He motioned towards his tools with an apologetic smile. She nodded and started packing the gear away.

Hiccup turned his attention back to his father. He tried to keep up the pace, as Stoick seemed far too preoccupied to care about Hiccup's shorter legs.

"It's the fifth year, Hiccup," Stoick finally broke the silence. Hiccup froze mid-stride. He knew what that meant. It was the year of the Games.

Their tribe was in a loose alliance with a few other Viking tribes and some small towns on the Mainland's coast. Being constantly sieged by dragons and pirates crazy enough to risk being caught in a dragon raid, they didn't contribute much. But every five years, the allies sent their best warriors to Berk to compete in the art of dragon slaying.

The only thing Berk could have exported in vast quantities was dragons. The Games lasted two weeks, every single day bloodier than the final exam of a Dragon Training. Only the best could stand in the face of such a challenge. And the home team never stood defeated. Stoick never stood defeated.

This is what they gave to the alliance: they were the fiercest, the strongest, the example to follow. The madmen refusing to run away, even from an entire nest of dragons.

"When?" he asked. How much time until it all hits the fan?

"Two months, tops. I think our first guests might arrive as soon as next week."

"Well," Hiccup ran his fingers through his hair, "we'll come up with something." To explain it to the best dragon killers why their profession is unneeded and in fact, an evil thing.

"That's the spirit!" Stoick smiled, showing his anxiety. "We'll discuss this with Spitelout and Gobber after dinner. Bring Snotlout and Astrid with you, will ya?"

"Uh, sure. Dad?"

"Hm?"

"What's with the girl who crashed last night?"

"Oh, that. That's out of our hands, I'm afraid," Stoick said, smacking his son on the shoulder. "If she is a scout, they'll miss her, and by tomorrow it will be raining dragons here, and we'll all die. So no worries, amiright?"

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><p>"Seriously, man, what am I doing here?" Snotlout complained as they climbed the stairs to the Great Hall.<p>

"And me?" Astrid replied. "I guess your dad wants you to be Hiccup's right hand when he becomes chief, like he is to Stoick. But me?"

"Look, Hiccup is a great rider and all, but he sucks at ground combat. You will be the next battle commander. Oh, and Hiccup," he turned to the boy trailing behind them, "if you manage to convince your dad to make me the next chief, I will personally axe-murder you."

Hiccup frowned as he remembered the "conversation" with his father. It was a few weeks after his big battle against the dragon queen. His father was boasting about what a great chief Hiccup will make, when the subject of his pride suggested that maybe, possibly he didn't have much leadership in him. That the other teens did what he said, because he was the only one who showed confidence in a situation that confused the hell out of them. That if Astrid hadn't stood behind him, half the village would have died.

The argument quickly devolved into a shouting match after Hiccup suggested Snotlout to be chief. Hiccup hoped for some help from his prospective replacement, but to his surprise, Snotlout quickly and vehemently denied any positive qualities that he might have had. Shortly thereafter, Spitelout killed the idea by quietly noting that his son was "not ready for such responsibilities".

"Why? Why don't you wanna be chief?"

"Remember when you were unconscious? After the old hag head-butted the rocks?"

"For a week, yeah."

"Six days, to be precise. The first three of which was like a prelude to Ragnarok. Each day offering a new, improved way for things to Go Horribly Wrong. It was fun enough to get the tribe on the dragons, as all the ships were toast, also to explain to four Nadders to grab Toothless by the legs, because he can't fly, \_and\_ convince Toothless to let you be strapped onto Stormfly, because he wasn't exactly a safe choice. Then things actually got easy, because dragons are real good at flying in groups.

"But! When we got home, there was the tiny little task of making

everyone get along nicely. Your dad was no use in the beginning, sitting at your bed and mumbling to himself. My dad and Gobber spent all day running around and calming people. Have you seen old Pegleg pulling his mustache in desperation? It's a really scary sight, let me tell you.

"Then there were the dragons. Who was supposed to be helping them settle in? Toothless? Same state as your dad. Fishlegs? His best quality was that he is so padded, he can take a helluva beating, which is good when around nervous dragons. The Twins? The Zippelbacks like 'em, sure, butâ€¦|

"So basically Astrid and I were running this village for three days, because no one else could. Actually, we couldn't! The dragons didn't make much trouble, because Astrid is scary enough to bully them into obedience,â€¦"

"Am not!"

"â€¦but the men really were on the edge. Then Astrid had this idea on the third day, that I should give a Big Speechâ€¦"

"Okay, that was a stupid idea."

"â€¦to fix the situation, and it went seriously wrong, until my dad finally lost his calm (you know how often that happens), and yelled your dad's spirit back into him. I mean, literally yelled. It took like two hours, with curses that I will reserve for special occasions.

"Anyway, the chief managed the men from that point, and Toothless also came out now and then, and the dragons wouldn't dare doing anything he disapproves of. And based on that experience, I will never, ever be chief of anything."

"Oh," was all Hiccup could get out.

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><p>The Great Hall was the oldest building on Berk, the only one dating back to the first generation of Vikings to live on the island. It was big enough to provide shelter for the entire village as a last resort. The Vikings of the old days were brave, but not stupid.<p>

Far in the back of the enormous room sat six people, arguing about what path the tribe should take in the future.

Stoick's presence required no explanation. He was chief of the tribe. No decision was made without his say-so. Besides that, he led the villagers to battle.

Spitelout was the chief's brother and right hand. A man of few words, when he spoke, people listened very carefully. He had what Stoick lacked in diplomatic finesse. While his brother gave the village an iconic leader, the fiercest of all Vikings, it fell to Spitelout to whisper the right words to the right people, and to make them follow the less popular orders.

Gobber was no longer the warrior he used to be, but he had more



important duties now: feeding, clothing, and arming the village. If it wasn't about killing or talking, then it was the blacksmith's job. Making sure the crops got tended to. That enough fish got caught. That enough lumber fell for the houses. That there were swords to fight with.

Hiccup felt a little uncomfortable in the presence of three men. He was obviously expected to succeed his father as chief, which he already didn't like, but now he was being attributed wisdom he didn't have. All he thought himself good at was handling dragons.

Snotlout was busy giving out an air of indifference. He wanted nothing to do with making decisions, and he didn't have the tact to hide it. He entertained himself by throwing things to an equally bored Terrible Terror.

Astrid was the only one of the teens thrilled to be there. She was eager to do her best to help the others lead the village to prosperity. She was engaged in a heated argument with Stoick about how to deal with their guests' impending arrival.

"I'm telling you, if we send a ship out to meet them, there is a good chance they will come to harbor already shaking their axes at us," she just said.

"And if we spring it at them when they are already ashore, they will panic and start hacking people up," the chief countered.

"Like they wouldn't notice the heaps of dragons from afar," Hiccup said.

"I don't think we need to worry about first impressions," Spitelout put in. "The leaders of the people coming here are not ones to make rash decisions."

"But they do slash and hack first, and consider things later," Stoick shot back.

"I think you're approaching this from the wrong direction," Snotlout said, while throwing pieces of ham to the agitated Terror. "The whole explaining thing will probably work out, but then we will have shiploads upon shiploads of men who had nothing to think about during weeks of sailing other than slaying dragons. Those guys will be ready to slice things up with their eyelashes by blinking sternly at them."

"I don't think that is a legitimate way of killing," Gobber said rather sceptically. "Althoughâ€¦"

"Snotlout has a point," Hiccup conceded. "There will be an overflow of manlinessâ€¦ uh, I mean fighting spirit on this island," he corrected himself after a particularly disapproving stare from Astrid.

"This gets better and better," Stoick muttered, showing his unhappiness with the general standing of things for a moment.

"We might not even live that long. If the Scalesman girl really is a scout."

Stoick and Spitelout stiffened upon hearing that, while Gobber suddenly found something fascinating on the bottom of his mug. It was Spitelout who finally broke the silence.

"She is not. I personally checked her bags. I mean, after you convinced her dragon to give them up. She is clearly set for a nomadic life. Lots of maps and a flight log."

"Flight log?" the chief asked.

"Kinda like a ship's log, but for dragon flight."

"That's a good idea," Hiccup noted.

"Anyhow, it goes back for at least three years. I think she is an exile."

"That's good. I think." He wasn't completely sure about that. They knew nothing about the severity of the crimes that justify exile among the Scalesmen.

"Very good," his father whispered.

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file.